

Russia-Gate Gone Wild: Congressional Press Office Strips RT's Capitol Hill Credentials

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America's war on press freedom rages, RT and Sputnik News prime targets, all independent media threatened.

Every outlet and journalist diverging from the official narrative is endangered by a nation wanting truth-telling on vital issues suppressed.

Free and open expression is our most fundamental right. Without it all others are endangered.

Press freedom was targeted on Obama's watch, including by suppressing information everyone has a right to know, along with aggressively targeting whistleblowers and leakers.

Things are worse under Trump. Hostile actions against RT America and Sputnik News may be prelude to criminalizing their US operations, forcing them to shut down if things go this far.

Congressional action taken yesterday was the latest body blow to media freedom in America. A letter received by RT America said the following:

"The Executive Committee of the Congress Radio & Television Correspondents' Galleries exercised its authority, as garnered by the rules of House of Senate, to withdraw the news credentials of the RT Network by unanimous vote on November 21, 2017."

"The rules of the Galleries state clearly that news credentials may not be issued to any applicant employed 'by any foreign government or representative thereof.' "

"Upon its registration as a foreign agent under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), RT Network became ineligible to hold news credentials" - effective immediately, its credentials ordered to be returned to the Senate Sergeant.

Requiring RT America to register as a foreign agent was a shameful act, wanting its operations compromised – de-accreditation on Capitol Hill the latest example, likely more impediments to its work coming.

RT editor-in-chief **Margarita Simonyan** responded to the latest outrage, saying:

“To all the self-righteous defenders of ‘freedom of speech’ who oh-so-ardently proclaimed that FARA registration places no restrictions whatsoever on RT’s journalistic work in the US: Withdrawal of congressional credentials speaks much louder than empty platitudes.”

“And to borrow from Orwell, all ‘foreign agents’ are equal, but looks like only RT is denied congressional accreditation on the basis of FARA status, while the likes of NHK and China People’s Daily carry on business as usual, and US officials continue to claim that the forced FARA registration for RT America’s operating company isn’t at all discriminatory.”

Russia’s US ambassador **Anatoly Antonov** blasted the latest move against RT, saying:

“Most importantly, the thing that the Americans are so proud of today is freedom of the press. This is a direct violation of the main principle of the freedom of press in the United States.”

Antonov commented from San Francisco. The State Department denied him permission to enter Russia’s illegally seized consulate in the city.

Moscow promised tit-for-tat retaliation in response to hostile US actions. Expect an appropriate one following the de-accreditation of RT America on Capitol Hill.

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My newest book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

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<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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